

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property: Walnut Grove

historic name Walnut Grove

other names/site number Walnut Grove Farm; Walnut Hill; DHR File No. 088-0112

2. Location :

street & number 7508 Belmont Road

city or town Spotsylvania

state Virginia code VA county Spotsylvania code 177 Zip

22553 not for publication ☒ vicinity ☒

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official

Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

☐ entered in the National Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the
National Register

☐ See continuation sheet

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register

☐ removed from the National Register

☐ other (explain)

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Walnut Grove
Spotsylvania County, VA

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> 2 </u>	<u> 2 </u> buildings
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 2 </u> sites
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> structures
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u> objects
<u> 3 </u>	<u> 4 </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

 N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC	Sub: Single dwelling
DOMESTIC	Secondary structure
DOMESTIC	Secondary structure
FUNERARY	Cemetery

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC	Sub: Single dwelling
DOMESTIC	Secondary structures
DOMESTIC	Hotel: Bed and Breakfast
FUNERARY	Cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival _____

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: BRICK

roof: METAL: Tin

walls: WOOD: weatherboard;

METAL: Aluminum

other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Exceptional Regional Architectural Home described as follows:

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance ca. 1840-44**Significant Dates** ca. 1840-44**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

____ N/A _____

Cultural Affiliation _____ N/A _____**Architect/Builder** Jennings, William A., (presumed)**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See attached

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

___ previously listed in the National Register

___ previously determined eligible by the National Register

___ designated a National Historic Landmark

___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

X State Historic Preservation Office

___ Other State agency

___ Federal agency

___ Local government

___ University

___ Other

Name of repository: ___ N/A _____

10. Geographical Data**Acreage of Property** 8.08**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing

18 249171 4227770

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Dr. William M. Chadduck

Organization: Independent Investigator

Date: October 25, 2003

street & number: 7508 Belmont Road

Telephone: 540-854-7993

city or town : Spotsylvania

State: Virginia

zip code: 22553

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name: William M. Chadduck

Street & number: 7508 Belmont Road

Telephone: 540-854-7993

City or town: Spotsylvania

State: Virginia

zip code: 22553

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Walnut Grove
Spotsylvania County, VA

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SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Walnut Grove is a Greek Revival-style house situated on 8.08 acres atop a ridge of rolling farmland in southwestern Spotsylvania County, Virginia. The imposing dwelling was constructed on property purchased by Jonathan Johnson II in 1829. Walnut Grove was most likely built by William A. Jennings, a master builder of Greek Revival homes in this region from 1830 to 1850. The front elevation of the house is five bays in width on a raised brick basement. The most distinct Greek Revival-style feature is the raised entry porch on the façade; it has four square Tuscan columns supporting a flat roof and connected by the original balustrades. This entryway is detailed with elaborately carved sidelights and a leaded-tracery transom. Original wooden shutters are present on the windows of the raised basement and the first floor. The hip roofs have been re-covered with standing-seam metal. The floor plan of the home is L-shaped. A Tuscan columned rear porch, now screened, completes the northwest side. The house features three brick interior- end chimneys. Although the exterior treatment of Walnut Grove is traditional for mid-19th-century dwellings, its interior architectural details and workmanship are exceptional. On the first floor there are twelve-foot-high ceilings, eleven-inch molded pine baseboards, crossette molded door trim, raised panel doors with nickel-plated hardware, and the original heart pine floors. The window surrounds in the main parlor have fluted pilasters and feather-painted wainscoting. The baseboards have the original Sienna pattern faux marbling. The carved pine mantels also display fluted pilasters; these were also faux marbleized and/or grain-painted. Similar detailing is present in the dining room, but the window and door surrounds have more complex carved applications. The central hall contains an open stringer staircase with massive turned walnut newel posts. A less formal parlor comprising the rear ell has impressive wide pine wainscoting. It has been converted to a kitchen, preserving most of its original woodwork. Upstairs, are three bedrooms of original dimensions and condition. Today Walnut Grove appears much as it did in the mid-nineteenth century. The old smokehouse remains, as does the stone fireplace of the 18th-century Coleman house that preceded Walnut Grove and once served as its kitchen. The Bond house, an 18th-century structure, moved from Louisa County, has been placed on the site of a destroyed Walnut Grove dependency. Its restoration has received an award from the Spotsylvania Preservation Foundation. It is used as a bed and breakfast. Also on the property are an English garden, vegetable gardens, orchards, a vineyard and a Johnson family cemetery. The grounds and surrounding scenery, with views of the Blue Ridge Mountains to the west, add greatly to the feeling of elegance that once embodied surely one of the finest homes in Spotsylvania County, especially in this remote rural locality.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Floor Plan

The basic floor plan of Walnut Grove is L-shaped. The front of the house faces east and measures 52 feet in width. Centered on the front is a single-story porch, 15 feet wide and 9 feet deep with wooden steps descending to the ground level. On the first floor there is a central hall, 10 feet wide and 20 feet deep, separating the north or main parlor, 20 feet in length and width, from the south or dining room. The primary staircase, 32 inches wide, ascends partially on the south side of the hall, crosses on the west end, and completes its course along the north wall. The staircase also descends from the south side of the central hall directly into the raised basement. The south side of the house measures 32 feet and 8 inches; the south section is divided in half by a wall creating the dining room on the east side and another parlor, now the kitchen, on the west. Both of these rooms are 20 feet wide and 16 feet deep. A half bath, 4 feet by 5 feet, has been made in the northeast corner of the west parlor and is entered from the central hall beneath the staircase. On the rear (west) elevation of the house there is a single-story porch, measuring 30 feet wide and 10 feet deep. On the south side of the house there is a 10-foot-square, 1 and 1/2-story enclosed porch containing a staircase descending from the west parlor/kitchen to the raised basement. The floor plans of the second story and the raised basement reflect the configuration of the main floor. On the second floor, there are three bedrooms, one on the north side over the main parlor, and on the south side, two of equal size over the dining room and west parlor/kitchen. The east end of the central hallway upstairs has been walled off for a bathroom, 10 feet wide and 5 feet deep. In the raised basement, the north side has remained unfinished; it is used for utilities. Another exiting staircase in the northeast corner has been closed off. The south section was finished at the time of the original construction and was used for living space; it is now divided into an office and storage area. The part corresponding to the central hall above is divided by a wall creating a passageway, 5 feet wide, connecting the north and south sections. The remaining space includes the stairwell and a root cellar. There are original closets in the bedrooms, the dining room, and the west parlor.

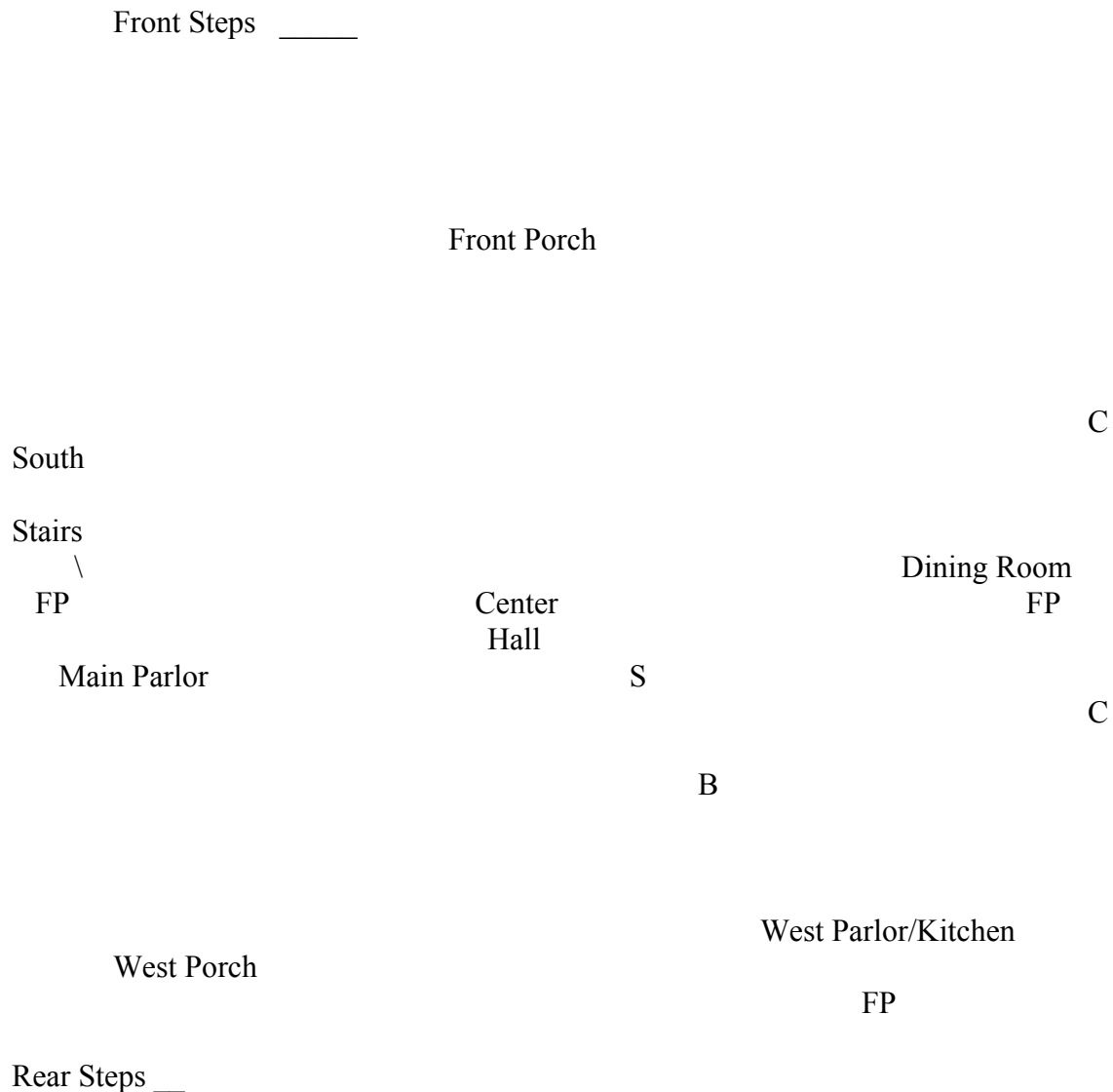
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This line drawing depicts the layout of the first floor of Walnut Grove. **Scale:** 1/8 inch per foot.



Abbreviations: S, staircase; C, closet; FP, fireplace; B, bathroom

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Exterior Description

As shown in photograph 1, the front (east) elevation of the house at Walnut Grove is a 5-bay-wide, single-pile hip-roofed house that has 1:5 Flemish/stretcher-bond brick raised basement with a central entry. All façade openings have wood surrounds and sills; the working shutters on the windows at the basement level and first floor are original. On the second floor the shutters are reproductions of the original ones. The most distinct Greek Revival feature, and one used in all of William Jennings's homes, is the entry porch on the façade (photograph 2). The raised entry porch is wood frame on brick piers. Four paired, square, paneled columns support a flat roof, once topped with a balustrade. The square columns are connected with railings and balusters similar to those of the interior staircase. The double doors of the entry have single-panel sidelights with curvilinear tracery on each side and a leaded-tracery, three-light transom. The roof of the porch can be accessed by a single Dutch-style door located directly above the main entry. Both the porch roof and house roof are standing-seam metal roofs. The wooden weatherboards have a 4 and ½-inch overlap; they have been covered with aluminum siding having a 4-inch overlap, retaining much of the original appearance. Three interior-end chimneys rise above the roofline.

The rear (west) elevation is three bays wide on the north section of the L-shaped structure. On the first floor, north end, there is a porch with square paneled columns, like those in front, supporting the standing-seam metal roof. The original brick piers of the porch have been enclosed with new brick and parged. The porch is now screened. The south section of the west elevation has no windows, in keeping with a William A. Jennings feature¹ incorporated into his own home, probably to help with temperature control. Photograph 3 shows the west elevation. Photograph 4 shows an exterior view of a window on the rear side of the house; details of the molded window surrounds can be seen as well as the large sill carved to allow water run-off. A cross section of the exterior window molding is shown to the right. This same pattern was used on all of the windows and the trim molding in the raised basement.

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The south elevation is shown in photograph 5. It is three bays wide, and has an enclosed porch containing a staircase that accesses the outside from both the raised basement and west parlor/kitchen. In keeping with the Greek Revival style, there was a faux window (photograph 19) on the east side of the enclosed porch on the first floor. Use of faux windows to maintain symmetry is another Jennings trademark also used by him in the construction of Monteith and Edgewood. The faux window was covered when the aluminum siding was placed.² The shutters on the second-floor windows are original on the west side and reproductions made by Timberlane Woodcrafters of North Wales, Pennsylvania on the east side. The east side of the north elevation shows only the weatherboards, and has no windows, doors or other openings, probably an insulating technique also used by Jennings at his home,³ Clifton (now Merriewood), as well. The north or cold side was protected not only by the absence of windows, but also by placement of interior closets as buffers. The west side of the north elevation (photograph 3) shows the exterior of the ell. Both two-story, north and south elevations have interior-end chimneys of brick that pierce the roof. A view of the rolling hills to the west can be seen in photograph 6.

Interior Description

Walnut Grove displays an exceptionally detailed interior with twelve-foot-high ceilings, molded baseboards, and elaborate window and door surrounds. Each piece of heart-pine flooring runs the entire length of each room. The entry hall has double doors at each end, each having three raised panels to match the single entry six-panel doors throughout the home. The door surrounds have crossette configurations using 7 and 1/2-inch-wide molding in classic Greek Revival style.⁴ The front door has a three-light transom with leaded tracery. Although some of the original lead rosettes and finials were lost, reproductions were made from casts of the remaining ones to restore the transom. The sidelights have elaborate curvilinear tracery. Photograph 7 shows these features of the hallway and some of the hardware of the doors. The rear doors are identical, but with less elaborate surrounds, and open onto the west porch. Also in the hallway is an open-stringer staircase with a walnut rail and impressive turned walnut newel posts, nearly identical to the ones at Beaumont, another Jennings house. The staircase has scrolled S-shaped stringer brackets also similar to those seen in other Jennings homes.^{5,6} The staircase ascends 13 steps on the south side of the hall, crosses at the west end, and ascends another 6 steps to the second floor. Photograph 8 documents other features of the staircase including the configuration of the railing, newel post finials on the under side, and a very unusual feature, seen in other homes built by William Jennings.⁷ As noted in the right lower corner of the photograph, a cut-out at the level of

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the landing was made to increase headroom for tall persons ascending the stairs.

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One newel post cap is missing; an identical one was fashioned from local walnut wood. A half-bath has been added off the hall and is accessed by a door beneath the staircase. The door and moldings have been made to duplicate the original woodwork. The staircase also descends to the raised basement. From the hall, one door accesses the main parlor to the north and another accesses the dining room to the south.

The main parlor (photograph 9) has four windows, each surrounded by Greek Revival-style trim. Fluted pilasters support entablatures having three-membered cornices, curved friezes, and relatively plain architraves. The pilasters are very similar to those at Jennings's Edgewood, with flat grooves and a central extruded channel.⁸ Under the windows, vertical carved wood molding separates the sills from the raised panels in the wainscoting. The panels show the original feather-painted designs. Photograph 10 shows one of the northwest windows. One of the northwest windows had been removed, but its components were recovered, including the wainscoting panel, allowing its complete restoration. The baseboards are two-membered, measuring 11 inches high. The lower member is notched to receive the upper and has a lip on the bottom that fits into a groove cut into the flooring itself. The lower member, 7 inches high, shows a flat surface, faux marbled in a Sienna pattern.⁹ The upper member, 4 inches high, has an ogee pattern at the top and a lip on the bottom that fits into the groove on the top surface of the lower member (see C. under Molding Details, page 9). Photograph 11 shows details of the baseboards and fluted pilasters of the door surrounds. The mantel also has fluted pilasters that support a flat-surfaced lintel separated from the mantel top by cavetto molding. The flat surface lends itself to a finish of grain-painting or faux marbling, such as seen on identical mantels in the 1844 addition to Monteith by William Jennings.¹⁰ The firebox was rebuilt after a fire in 1958; at that time the hearthstones were replaced with bricks. Scrapings and surfaces retaining their original paint suggest that most of the woodwork at Walnut Grove was grain-painted in a walnut tone; however, over the decades many coats of paint have been applied.

The dining room photograph displays similar detailing including carved door and window surrounds. There are minor differences in the pilasters compared to those in the main parlor. The entablatures have unusual dentil applications topping the friezes; instead of blocks, there are pieces cut with compound curves. The wainscoting panels were grain-painted a dark walnut color rather than being feather-painted. The eleven-inch-high baseboards are identical to those in the parlor and the original faux marbling has recently been uncovered. The mantel is also the same, and the original hearthstones remain. Details of the dining room door surrounds are shown

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in photograph 13. The original porcelain knobs and nickel-plated escutcheons remain on the dining room doors.

The west parlor has been made into a kitchen. Detailing includes a molded mantel very similar to the others in the house and molded door surrounds. Notable is the thirty-two-inch high wainscoting made from eleven-inch-high, complex, one-member, base molding, cut from a single piece of pine as shown by example A of Molding Details illustrated on Continuation Sheet #9. The panels of the wainscoting are 18 and ½ inches wide, also cut from a single timber. In creating the kitchen as much of the wainscoting as possible was preserved. When the space for the hallway bath was walled off from the kitchen, the wainscoting on the inside wall of the new bathroom was moved back onto the new wall in the kitchen. Because of the severely damaged condition of the floor, it was covered with black and white tile, laid on the diagonal.

An open staircase extending off the kitchen also accesses the raised basement. A one-and-one-half-story enclosed porch contains pine stairs curving to an outside exit and brick steps leading from ground level to the basement. The stair exhibits a tapered newel post, a round rail, and original treads, all pine. The north end of the basement was never finished and, until recently, had a dirt floor. The south section was originally a finished living space with a plaster and lath ceiling, and plaster applied directly to the brick foundation walls. Some of this remains, and the hand-split lath is in keeping with the time of construction of Walnut Grove. The window and door surrounds are simpler, having the same pattern as those on the exterior of the house. The open ceiling areas disclose the massive 12 by 14 inch oak beams spanning the hallway and the kitchen/dining room walls above. The beams are labeled with Roman numerals at the positions where the floor joists attach. The joists and vertical supports are mortised into these beams with beveled tenons. At Jennings's Edgewood, one of the beams in its raised basement has the identical markings.⁷ The fireplaces in the south section have been restored using their original bricks; some of the more severely damaged ones were reversed and re-mortared to expose their preserved sides. The root cellar is intact but has a concrete floor, as does the rest of the basement. The brick walls have been waterproofed throughout most of the basement. In the south and southeast sections the original brick and remaining plaster have been left as they were. On the west side, three windows were bricked in years ago when the porch was enclosed. In the north section, the fireplace has been closed in to vent the furnace. Another exterior exit on the north wall was apparently closed in sometime in the past. For many years the basement had a water problem with standing water being 3 feet deep at times. Damage to door casings occurred requiring that three be removed. One doorway with the original 16-inch-thick jamb has been

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restored; the others show the original
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brick openings. A study has been made in the space below the dining room, and the remaining spaces are used for utilities and storage.

On the second floor there are three bedrooms, all of original dimensions with 10-foot-high ceilings. The window and door moldings are of the same configuration as those on the first floor but scaled down to 5 and ½ inches in width. Base moldings are the same. The doors have six raised panels and porcelain knobs like the others in the house, but the locks and nickel-plated escutcheons are simpler. The master bedroom (photograph 14) is above the main parlor and has four windows, two on the east side and two on the west. The fireplace was the site of a house fire in 1958, and in repairing the damage the fireplace was closed off. The mantelpiece had its charred pilasters replaced and was used in restoring one fireplace in the raised basement. The attic above shows charred timbers on the north end. There are two original closets on the north side, but no windows. They were on each side of the fireplace and enclosed chimney and most likely served as buffers from the cold north wind in winter, probably an insulating technique used by William Jennings in his own home. A bathroom has been walled off from the east side of the center hall, preserving the original Dutch-style door. The southeast bedroom has two windows on the east side and one on the south wall. A closet, probably finished later, is present between the fireplace and the west wall. The southwest bedroom has one window on the north side and one on the south. The west wall has the original fireplace and mantel with original closets to either side, again protecting the space from the frequently severe, prevailing west winds. The heart-pine floors are intact throughout the second floor. The hearthstones have been replaced with brick. Most of the interior walls have the original plaster; some have sheetrock.

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Molding Details

These illustrations (reduced 25%) show some of the molding details of Walnut Grove:

- A. This cross-section of the base molding in the west parlor/kitchen measures 10 and $\frac{1}{2}$ inches high and 1 and $\frac{3}{8}$ inches thick. It is cut from a single piece of pine lumber. At the top, the ogee trim is seen on the left and the cut groove on the upper right fit outside >>>>>> a piece of pine wainscoting affixed directly to the studs. The flat wainscoting panel is 18 and $\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide and 1 and $\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick, also cut from a single piece of pine. The lip on the bottom left of the molding fits into a groove cut directly into the heart pine flooring.
- B. This cross-section of molding, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch by 5 inches, was applied to the top of the wainscoting supporting a sill and finished >>>>>>>> with a small piece of triple-grooved crown molding. Note that the configuration of the ogee trim is identical to that on the base molding.
- C. This is a cross-section of molding, 1 and $\frac{1}{8}$ by 4 and $\frac{1}{2}$ inches, used as the cap of two-membered base moldings in the other rooms of Walnut Grove. The lower member >>>>> measures 6 and $\frac{1}{2}$ by 1 and $\frac{3}{4}$ inches, has a lip on the lower side to fit into the flooring, and has an upper groove cut to receive the lip of the cap. The cap is set back $\frac{3}{8}$ inch. The lower member was either grain-painted or faux-marbleized.

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Additions/Alterations

There have been no permanent additions to Walnut Grove. At one time a bathroom was enclosed on the west porch, but this was later removed. On the front, the porch floor was rebuilt using the original floor joists, turned bottom side up. The front steps have also been rebuilt and a concrete base step was added. Two of the porch columns were missing, but one original column allowed their reproduction and replacement. During the Morrow family ownership, aluminum siding was added. It resembles the original pine weatherboards, and in the process of removing it, a protective effect on the underlying wood has been realized. Stepwise removal of the remaining aluminum siding is anticipated. Mortar joints in the brickwork undergo re-pointing on a continuing schedule using a special mortar formula containing extra sand and lime as used in brickwork of the era. The flues for the fireplaces have been relined by Safe Chimneys, Inc. of Unionville, Virginia. In the 1950s, the sashes of the northeast window of the main parlor were removed and the opening used to access the first floor for storage of hay bales. The sashes were reproduced; otherwise, all of the window parts in the house are original. The northeast window of the parlor was made into a doorway to the above-mentioned bathroom, since removed. The window has been restored using all of the original parts except for the apron under the sill, which was hand-carved to match the others, and the baseboard, painted to match the faux marbling. Low-profile storm windows recommended for historical homes have been placed on all windows. These were custom made by West Window Company of Martinsville, Virginia. Plumbing, electrical service, and heating and air-conditioning have been added, but concealed chases house pipes, wires and ducts, except in the raised basement where they are exposed. French drains and sump pumps have been placed at the perimeter beneath the concrete floors to alleviate any water problems. Other repairs and alterations have been discussed in the descriptions of the individual spaces inside and outside the house. Except for minor differences and paint patterns, Walnut Grove appears very much as it did when it was first constructed.

Secondary Structures

Besides the main house, there are two structures of historic significance on the property. One is the smokehouse, a one-bay building constructed on a coursed rubble stone foundation with the original wooden floor. It is clad in random width, board-and-batten siding and topped with a front gabled standing-seam metal roof. The smokehouse, seen in photograph 15, is currently used as a garden shed.

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Just off the southwest corner of the main house is a stone chimney and fireplace, probably the remains of the 18th-century Robert S. Coleman house. The structure was built of large grey rocks resembling those used in the foundation of Mount Hermon Church (established 1812) and found in great quantities in rock formations on the west bank of Plentiful Creek to the east of Walnut Grove. The stone lintel above the hearth remains. The house itself was a log structure recalled by previous residents of Walnut Grove and neighbors. The site lends itself to future archeological study. The chimney is shown in photograph 16.

An icehouse north of the main house was demolished and filled-in during the Fletcher ownership. Its site has been marked and also has archeological study possibilities.

The cemetery consists of a single grave, that of Joseph Watkins Johnson, second owner of Walnut Grove. The grave, with its headstone and footstone, is surrounded by a substantial iron fence. It is located southeast of the main house and is shown in photograph 17.

A more recently constructed concrete block utility shed and four-stall pole barn are located across the driveway to the north of the house. These house equipment for maintenance of the grounds.

On the southeast corner of the property is the Guest House, last known at the end of the 19th century as the Bond house. A Bond descendant, born in the house, has supplied photographs showing its condition 80 years ago. The house is located on the site of a dependency, presumed to be the old Walnut Grove plantation office that did not survive. In the 1980s the Bond house was moved from adjacent Louisa County to Walnut Grove just prior to its being burned for a fire department drill. The house, believed to have been built in the 18th century, rests on its original hand-hewn log joists measuring nearly a foot in diameter. A number of houses like the Bond house were built in Louisa County, Virginia, during the same period, but only one other has survived. It is located in the Green Springs Historic District of Louisa County.¹¹ The house is a three-bay, single-pile, one-and-a-half-story dwelling, clad in weatherboards, most of which is original. When moved, the house was placed on a new block foundation, and a new stretcher-bond, brick chimney was built on the north elevation. Originally the house had fireplaces on both ends, and bricks from the old chimneys were used for the new hearth. The entry has a wood paneled door flanked by sidelights, and six-over-six, double-hung wooden sash windows. A standing-seam metal roof was replaced in 1997. Originally, the house had a shed-type front porch. The columns of the porch were at one time made of bedposts.¹² A new open porch has been added to replace the lost original. Over the years many modifications have been made to the

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house. The floor plan now includes a center hall, parlor, kitchen and bathroom on the first floor.

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A rear ell has been added on the west side to replace the original ell that was burned when the house was moved. It contains a bedroom and utility areas. Other interior features include: original wide paneled wainscoting in the hall and kitchen, molded wood surrounds with pegged joints, original exposed ceiling joists, a carved mantel with taper post and ball supports, and a ¼-flight winder stair with wide horizontal board walls off the center hall. The original wood floors were replaced with new pine because of deterioration. The second-floor space has been refinished and has recreated detailing and carpet over the original floorboards. The guesthouse has received an award from the Spotsylvania Preservation Foundation for its restoration and is used currently as a bed and breakfast. Photograph 18 shows the front (east) elevation of the guesthouse.

Also on the grounds are a Cabernet Franc vineyard on the south side and an orchard on the northwest side, presumed to be located at the site of the original. Fruit trees include several varieties of apple, cherry, plum and pear. An English garden has been created with many species of perennials. Open fields with many old trees and shrubs complete the landscaping, and views of rolling farmland can be seen in all directions.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Walnut Grove, built in the years 1840-1844, is an important example of Greek Revival architecture in Spotsylvania County, Virginia. Located in a remote section of the county, the house was constructed by William A. Jennings, a master builder of the region from 1830 to 1850, and displays exceptionally well-preserved examples of outstanding craftsmanship in its interior woodwork including notable faux marbling and graining. No other dwelling of its quality and style exists in the region. The property was cut from a large 1722 land patent from King George II to Harry Beverly. The land is situated on an elevated ridge overlooking Arseforemost Run to the west and Plentiful Creek to the east and has views of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The house was built for Jonathan Johnson II, whose family had lived in the area since colonial times. Jonathan Johnson II was a wealthy businessman and livestock farmer who appreciated a lifestyle of quality, demanded good workmanship and was active in regional politics as well. Walnut Grove meets the National Register Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a notable Greek Revival-style dwelling and as the work of a local master builder.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1722, Harry Beverly, a gentleman of Virginia, received a large land patent from King George II through Governor Alexander Spotswood.^{1,2,3,4} One daughter of Mr. Beverly, Susanna Beverly Winslow, inherited^{4,5} the portion of the land grant on which stands Walnut Grove. The property remained in the Winslow family until its sale to Thomas Lipscomb in 1796.⁶ Lipscomb in turn sold the land with its “buildings, waterways and orchards” to Robert S. Coleman in 1817.⁷ During the Coleman tenure, the Mutual Assurance Society of Richmond, Virginia, insured his dwelling, kitchen and his barn for \$700.⁸ The remains of the chimney, believed to be that of Mr. Coleman’s house, still survive. The house itself was a log structure that survived long enough to be remembered still by senior residents living nearby. It was used as a kitchen and laundry in later years. After the death of Coleman, the executors of his estate sold the acreage of Walnut Grove to Jonathan Johnson II and his wife, Frances Estes Johnson for \$1,616.⁹ Jonathan Johnson had the Greek Revival mansion built on the property during the period of 1840-1844 and originated the name of Walnut Grove for his home. The obituary of Jonathan Johnson, appearing in the June 26, 1873, edition of the *Virginia Herald* stated that he had died “at his

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residence, Walnut Grove".¹⁰ A nephew of Jonathan Johnson, Joseph Watkins Johnson, purchased Walnut Grove

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from his uncle's estate in 1875;¹¹ he lived there until his death in 1887 and is buried in a single-grave cemetery on the property. Having no heirs, Joseph Johnson willed that Walnut Grove be sold. Lee J. Graves purchased Walnut Grove in 1890.¹² He and his wife, Lillian Brockman Graves, both relatives of Ginger Graves Chadduck, wife of the present owner, kept the property until 1900. A portrait of Lillian Brockman Graves now hangs in a hallway at Walnut Grove. From that time Walnut Grove has been owned by R.L. Biscoe until 1910,¹³ by H.C. Early until 1917,¹⁴ and by G.T. Yagel until 1942.¹⁵ During the Yagel ownership, the grandmother of Ginger Graves Chadduck, Edna Houchin Ritchie (1915-2003), lived with her family in one of the houses on the Walnut Grove property and recalled the log house where the chimney remains. As a young girl, she planted the lilac bushes that flourish next to the site of the present day guest house.¹⁶ In later times, Walnut Grove was owned by H.A. Owens (1945-6), C.A. Flippo until 1953, Fletcher in 1953, and R.T. Morrow until 1976. R.W. LaPointe then divided the farm, selling the present 8.08 acres of Walnut Grove to J.F. Vilga in 1979. The present owner, William M. Chadduck, purchased Walnut Grove in 1994.¹⁷

History of Jonathan Johnson II, the original owner of Walnut Grove

Jonathan Johnson II (1803-1873) was born in Spotsylvania County, Virginia, quite near Walnut Grove. In colonial times, his grandfather, Alexander Johnson received a land patent and developed a farm known as *Panier*. Most of the Johnson family is buried in the family cemetery at *Panier*.¹⁸ One of Jonathan's brothers, Lewis Johnson, lived at Forest Hill, a 600-acre plantation bordering on the north side of Walnut Grove.¹⁹ John Lipscomb Johnson, (1835-1915), son of Lewis Johnson and nephew of Jonathan, wrote: "my uncle, Jonathan Johnson gave himself without stint to making money. He was a rich man and lived in good style, being a lover of fine horses and wines. He was a tall, handsome, clean-shaven man, a born horseman. His landed estate was not as extensive as my father's, but he had the finest stock in the community, horses, hogs, and cattle. It is said that the Federal soldiers when at his house during the Civil War found a jar which he had buried containing \$ 80,000."²⁰ Many bonds, deeds and legal transactions, recorded in the County Clerks' offices of Spotsylvania, Orange and Louisa counties attest to his wealth and business dealings; he even accepted slaves, as well as offspring of the females, as loan collateral.^{21,22,23,24,25,26,27} In 1820 Jonathan Johnson married Frances Estes from nearby Greenfield plantation; the Estes family was one of prominence in the area.²⁸ When his

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sister-in-law lost her horses after the Civil War, Jonathan bought her a horse. As best man at his nephew's wedding, he **Section 8 Page 16**

provided a sum of gold as a wedding gift.²⁹ In 1873, only a few years after the Civil War, an inventory of his estate included large sums of money, fine furniture, silver place settings, and even a condiment caster for the dining room. His gold watch was valued at \$200.³⁰ He was also a beekeeper and reportedly won a prize for his honey at the Rappahannock County fair in 1857.³⁰ In 1840 Jonathan Johnson was appointed commissioner at the Andrews Tavern voting district.³² He was a staunch Democrat and, reportedly on the morning of election, the sound of drum and fife would be heard early at Jonathan Johnson's house as the signal for all near-by Democrats to come together. The men and horses in Sunday turnout set out to the polls with flags and streamers flying.³³ In 1858, he was appointed delegate to the Gubernatorial Convention in Petersburg, Virginia.³⁴ Thus, Jonathan Johnson was the type of man that would be expected to build a fine home such as Walnut Grove. Local lore tells that during the building process, he kicked a spindle from the stairwell because it was not straight.³⁵ Jonathan Johnson II was a man of wealth, business and political connections, and family tradition. He was active in the affairs of a remote and otherwise poor area of mid-nineteenth-century Spotsylvania County, Virginia. His legacy to the area was Walnut Grove.

About the presumed architect and builder of Walnut Grove, William A. Jennings

At the time of Jonathan Johnson's ownership of Walnut Grove, one of the most prominent architects in neighboring Orange County was William A. Jennings. Mr. Jennings was a master builder whose Greek Revival masterpieces were constructed during the 1830-1850 period.³⁶ His own home Clifton, now called Merriewood, was built in the same style in Orange County.³⁷ Near his own home he built Edgewood³⁸ with many features common to all of his homes. Near Gordonsville, Virginia, he built Monteith³⁹ and Beaumont,⁴⁰ both homes containing materials and features setting him apart clearly as a master builder of his time. In 1844 he petitioned the Orange County Court to allow a sawmill to be placed on Marsh Run, a waterway on land he purchased in 1843.^{41,42} He had wooden parts cut by a slave worker on his own property and transported them to work sites. Curiously, William Jennings was an avid Democrat and his home was a frequent meeting place for political colleagues.⁴³ He died in 1897 at the age of 95.⁴⁴ It would seem fitting that Jonathan Johnson would choose a contemporary, William Jennings, not only a builder of fine homes, but also a man active in Democratic politics, to build Walnut Grove.

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Walnut Grove, the Manor House

Certainly, the most significant aspect of Walnut Grove is its Greek Revival architecture, essentially unique to mid-nineteenth century Spotsylvania County, as well as the fact that it was built by the master builder of the region, William A. Jennings. In support of the architectural relationships are many features of Jennings's homes, common to them all, and found at Walnut Grove. The period in which Walnut Grove was constructed was 1840-1844. Jonathan Johnson's nephew wrote of the house being present for the 1840 and 1844 presidential elections.⁴⁵ A brick in the basement fireplace is inscribed with the date: 1841. The lath beneath the plaster is hand split: sawn lath came into general use after 1845. Another brick fragment is inscribed: "___A J." The first letter was on a missing fragment, but Jonathan Johnson, another possible name accounting for the "J" on the brick, had either a W., rather than "A", or no middle name. It is most likely that the missing initial is: "W", for William A. Jennings. Other features of Jennings's construction details include: raised basements common to all his homes, the four Tuscan-columned entry ways seen at Walnut Grove, Beaumont, Merriewood and Edgewood, and a lack of windows on the north sides of his homes, probably done to protect from cold weather.⁴⁶ Walnut Grove and Merriewood have no windows or doors on their north sides. Faux windows were used on certain walls for purposes of symmetry, a feature of the Greek Revival style. Walnut Grove, Edgewood and Monteith all have such faux windows.⁴⁷ The stairwells of builders' houses often reflected their trademarks.

The newel posts at Merriewood and Monteith are identical, and the newel posts at Beaumont and Walnut Grove are alike. Furthermore, the builder of Walnut Grove, Beaumont and Merriewood, provided unique cut-outs in the staircases to provide added headroom for tall persons ascending the stairs.⁴⁸ Builders of fine homes of the times, used itinerant craftsmen to provide special services such as faux marbling as seen on the baseboards and wainscoting at Walnut Grove and on the mantels in the 1844 addition to Monteith, constructed by William Jennings.⁴⁹ Finally, there were no other buildings of such craftsmanship built in the Greek Revival style in the entire region. Thus, the evidence is strong that Jennings was responsible for the construction of Walnut Grove.

Although Jonathan Johnson did not serve in the military, Walnut Grove did not escape being

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touched by the Civil War. In July of 1864, following the Battle of Trevilian Station in Louisa County, Union General Philip Sheridan's troops crossed the North Anna River at Carpenter's Ford and came up Winslow's Road to Twyman's Store and Mount Hermon Church.⁵⁰ They

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camped just to the south of Walnut Grove. Raiding parties camped around the house, and confiscated staples including corn and bacon hidden under the beds in the bedroom over the parlor. They also took livestock as well as valuables in the house and a large sum of money buried in the barn. Jonathan Johnson's niece, Kate Cale, was living at Walnut Grove at the time, and wrote a lengthy letter to a friend, "Nan," describing their treatment during these encounters. Ms. Cale listed the various losses of neighbors in the area, and even described how one soldier struck "her Jane" for refusing to open the cellar door. She added: "Jane hit him back with some onions she had."⁵¹ Previous owners of Walnut Grove excavated a Civil War sabre in the front yard.⁵² An 1863 map of Spotsylvania County shows the relationship of Jonathan Johnson's home to Mount Hermon Church, Twyman's store and the roadways traveled by Sheridan's cavalry⁵³, and a Louisa County map of the time shows the route taken from Trevilian Station following the battle.⁵⁴

Through the decades, Walnut Grove has been the home to Joseph Watkins Johnson, for many years a Spotsylvania County supervisor.⁵⁵ During the ownership by R.L. Biscoe, his father, Captain William Biscoe, a master cabinet maker in the area, died at Walnut Grove.⁵⁶ Many Captain Biscoe pieces of fine furniture can be found in area homes including Prospect Hill, a National Register landmark. For generations, the Biscoe family, as well as many other Walnut Grove families, have made a living from the rich farmlands. At one time, the house fell into marked disrepair and was even used to store hay.⁵⁷ A photograph of the property in the 1930s Photograph 20 shows its less-than- elegant condition at the time. More recently, much energy has been put into researching and restoring Walnut Grove to its original appearance. Walnut Grove remains a tribute to outstanding architectural detail and craftsmanship.

Acknowledgements

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The applicant wishes to acknowledge the contribution of Mrs. Brenda Schulte who conducted

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research on Walnut Grove and prepared the Preliminary Information Form, while a student of Historic Preservation at Mary Washington College, Fredericksburg, Virginia.

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Boundary Description

The boundary of Walnut Grove is shown on the accompanying plat/map prepared by James H. Bell, Jr., professional land surveyor, and consists of 8.08 acres bordered on its east side by Virginia State Road 652, also known as Belmont Road. The property is referred to as Lot 55-A-1 on the Spotsylvania, Virginia Tax Map for the Livingston District. The property is positioned on a ridge (GPS elevation 462 feet above sea level) between Arseforemost Run to the west and Plentiful Creek to the east, and is surrounded by rolling farmlands in all directions. All structures on the property are depicted on the site plan.

Boundary Justification

The original tract of land purchased by Jonathan Johnson in 1829 consisted of 385 acres, but at the time of his death in 1873, his home place, Walnut Grove, contained 236 acres on the west side of what is now known as Belmont Road. What was referred to as his "magnificent estate" in 1887, included the Greek Revival mansion, a log home, probably built in the 18th century for Robert S. Coleman and later used as a kitchen and laundry, an icehouse, a smoke house and other outbuildings. In 1976, the property was subdivided; the 8.08-acre parcel, comprising the present boundary of Walnut Grove, contains the main house, the remains of the log home, and the smoke- house. The site of the original icehouse has been approximately located but no longer exists. The grave of Joseph Watkins Johnson, nephew of Jonathan Johnson and later owner of Walnut Grove, is present. Other outbuildings of unknown age and significance have come and gone over the decades. No historic structures remain on the surrounding parcels, now used for farming.

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**Walnut Grove
Spotsylvania County, VA**

Section Photographs Page 28

All photographs are of:

Walnut Grove, 7508 Belmont Road
Spotsylvania County, Virginia
VDHR File Number 088-0112
William M. Chadduck, photographer

All negatives are stored with the VA Department of Historic Resources:

- Photo 1.** Front (east) elevation of Walnut Grove, looking west, August 2003, Negative no. 21093:23
- Photo 2.** Front entryway, east elevation, looking west, August 2003, Negative no. 21092:04
- Photo 3.** West elevation, looking east; north side of ell, August, 2003, Negative no, 21092:01
- Photo 4.** Exterior view of window, west elevation, August 2003, Negative no.21092:12
- Photo 5.** South elevation, looking north, September 2003, Negative no. 21093:11
- Photo 6.** View from Walnut Grove, looking west, August 2003, Negative no. 21092:16
- Photo 7.** Interior view of front entryway, looking east, August 2003, Negative no. 21092:30
- Photo 8.** Second floor staircase, August 2003, Negative no. 21092:29
- Photo 9.** North parlor, looking north, October 2003, Negative no. 21094:11
- Photo 10.** Window detail, north parlor, August, 2003, Negative no. 21092:32
- Photo 11.** Baseboard details, north parlor, August 2003, Negative no. 21092:25
- Photo 12.** Dining room, looking south, October 2003, Negative no. 21094:12
- Photo 13.** Door surround, dining room, August, 2003, Negative no. 21092:33

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**Walnut Grove
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Photo 14. North bedroom, looking southwest, October 2003, Negative no. 21094:22

Photo 15. Wooden smokehouse, looking southwest, August 2003, Negative no. 21092:14

Photo 16. Old stone chimney, looking south, August 2003, Negative no. 21092:08

Photo 17. Grave of Joseph W. Johnson, looking west, September 2003, Negative no. 21093:05

Photo 18. Guest house, front (east) elevation, looking west, August 2003, Negative no. 21092:17

Photo 19. Front elevation of Walnut Grove, looking west, ca. 1935, no negative available.